TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

DATE: JANUARY 17, 2006

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE UTILITIES RULES AND REGULATIONS ON GAS PRESSURES, WASTEWATER SERVICE CONNECTIONS, AND COOLING TOWER CREDITS

RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests that the City Council adopt the attached resolution to amend Utility Rule and Regulations 3 (Description of Services) and 23 (Special Wastewater Utility Regulations) to provide for (i) optional higher gas pressure connections to accommodate newer “smart” household appliances; (ii) replacement of wastewater laterals; and (iii) adjustment of wastewater charges for facilities with water cooling towers.

DISCUSSION

UTILITIES RULE AND REGULATION 3 C. 1

Rule and Regulation 3 C. 1. describes the City’s standard “low pressure gas service,” provided at six inches of water column (6” WC.)

Many of the new “smart” household gas appliances require 6" WC at the appliance itself to work properly. If the gas is delivered to the meter at 6” WC, there is no allowance for pressure losses in the piping between the gas meter and the appliance. Over the past couple of years, several increases to the gas pressure above 6” WC were needed when customers replaced gas stoves or installed new tankless water heaters.

There is a need to amend the rule to provide standard procedures for responding to requests for increased pressure above 6” WC. The City has a number of different elevated pressures in our meter data base, which has led to billing errors resulting in a loss of revenue to the City. Standardizing elevated pressures will increase operational efficiency by standardizing equipment and billing...
multipliers.

UTILITIES RULE AND REGULATION 23 B.2
Under the Uniform Plumbing Code, new construction, (including additions or remodelings with a value greater than 50% of the value of the existing structures on the lot,) must have fixtures, including a waste water lateral line, in compliance with current code. As a standard condition of permit approval, the City requires that the property owner replace the lateral all the way to the point of connection with the main line, not just to the property line, at the property owner’s expense. Since the requirement is now standard, and pertains to utility service, it should be included in the Rules and Regulations.

The City’s lateral wastewater lines were installed by private property owners at the time the original buildings were built. It has become very apparent in recent years these lines are not adequate for the increased flows generated by remodeled and newly constructed buildings. Frequently a small bungalow is replaced with a much larger house and reconnects to the existing 75 year old sewer lateral. While nominally this may be a 4” lateral, it has become constricted with corrosion, cracking, roots, etc. This may have been adequate for the older building but the existing lateral cannot support the new wastewater load. There have been several cases of sewage overflows into new buildings in recent years. The follow-up investigation of the overflow has made clear the importance of requiring replacement of the entire lateral.

UTILITIES RULE AND REGULATION 23 C.
Wastewater charges are set based upon water consumption. Current language for large wastewater customers (where meters show flow rates of on average more than 25,000 gallons per day) allows for the deduction of a portion of cooling tower water usage, which does not add to wastewater loads from annual wastewater flow calculations. No method of calculation is specified. The new rule language sets out in detail how cooling tower water usage must be metered, recorded, and submitted for use in wastewater flow calculations.

RESOURCE IMPACT
There are no resource impacts to the City as a result of these language changes.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
These recommendations do not represent a change in current City policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
The work required to replace existing utility facilities by the adoption of these changes to the Rules and Regulations do not constitute a project under the California Environmental Air Quality Act; therefore, no environmental assessment is required.

ATTACHMENTS
A: Resolution
B: Utility Rule and Regulation 3 showing proposed changes
C: Utility Rule and Regulation 23 showing proposed changes